

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 IO-13 ACDA-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00 DOE-11 SOE-02
CEQ-01 OES-07 MCE-00 /126 W
-----060398 281013Z/20

P 280751Z FEB 78

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8353

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION MBFR VIENNA

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

USMISSION USBERLIN

USMISSION USNATO

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 03089

USSALTTWO

BELGRADE ALSO FOR USDEL CSCE

E.O. 11652: GDS

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TAGS: PARM, SALT, PEPR, US, UR

SUBJECT: SOVIET PRESS ON U.S. REACTION TO BREZHNEV FEBRUARY 24 STATEMENT

REF: (A) MOSCOW 2709, (B) 77 MOSCOW 18505

SUMMARY: PREDICTABLY, SOVIET PRESS IS SELECTIVELY PRINT-

ING EXCERPTS FROM U.S. NEWSPAPERS AND SPEECHES
-- WELCOMING BREZHNEV'S FEB. 24 REMARKS ON IMPROVING
SOVIET-U.S. RELATIONS;
-- FOCUSING ON CONGRESSIONAL AND OTHER U.S.-BASED OBSTA-
CLES TO THE SALT TALKS; AND,
-- PREDICTING THAT SALT AGREEMENT COULD POSSIBLY BE POST-
PONED TO 1979 OR MAY NOT EVEN BE CONCLUDED AND RATIFIED.
(ALTHOUGH THERE ARE ONLY A FEW REFERENCES IN THIS REGARD,
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME WE HAVE SEEN THIS POSSIBILITY
OPENLY MENTIONED IN SOVIET CENTRAL PRESS. WE EXPECT THAT
BREZHNEV'S FEB 24 REMARKS ATTEMPTING TO HIGHLIGHT SOVIET
GOOD INTENTIONS ON SALT AND TO PLACE BLAME ON U.S. FOR
SLOW SALT PACE WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE BASIS FOR SOVIET
PROPAGANDA. SEPTEL FOLLOWS ON FEB 26 STUDIO NINE TV COM-
MENTARY ON SALT, NEUTRON BOMB AND THE HORN. END SUMMARY.
1. SOVIET MEDIA ARE PORTRAYING U.S. REACTION TO BREZHNEV
'S FEB 24 REMARKS AS POSITIVE, OCCASIONALLY EVEN ENTHUS-
IASTIC, WHILE SELECTIVELY HIGHLIGHTING U.S. NEWS ITEMS
AND SPEECHES THAT SUPPORT BREZHNEV'S CONTENTION THAT
"SOME" INFLUENTIAL PERSONS IN THE U.S. ARE SEEKING TO
RETARD SALT NEGOTIATIONS. FEB 27 PRAVDA CARRIES FEB 26
TASS ARTICLE REPORTING SENATOR KENNEDY'S SAN FRANCISCO
SPEECH. ARTICLE HAS KENNEDY:
-- CALLING FOR AN EARLY CONCLUSION TO SALT TALKS AND DE-
CLARING THAT THE PRIMARY U.S. FOREIGN POLICY GOAL SHOULD
BE TO PREVENT NUCLEAR WAR AND TO ESTABLISH COOPERATIVE
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RELATIONS AMONG GREAT POWERS;
-- STRONGLY CPLICIZING "THOSE POLITICAL FIGURES IN THE
U.S. WHO ARE OPPOSING THE CONCLUSION OF A U.S.-SOVIET
AGREEMENT ON LIMITING THE STRATEGIC ARMS RACE": AND
-- STATING THAT "SOME POLITICIANS IN WASHINGTON" OCCASION-
ALLY DISCUSS DELAYING THE SIGNING OF AN AGREEMENT UNTIL
1979," EVEN IN THE EVENT THE NEGOTIATIONS ARE COMPLETED.
" TASS QUOTES KENNEDY AS HOLDING THAT THE "U.S. SENATE
SHOULD IMMEDIATELY RATIFY" A SALT II AGREEMENT" AND THAT
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A MISTAKE FOR THE U.S." SINCE THIS WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO
FURTHERING THE ARMS RACE AND COMPLICATE SOVIET-U.S. RELA-
TIONS.
2. E. GRIGOR'EV, IN FEB 26 PRAVDA "INTERNATIONAL WEEK"
COLUMN, QUOTES RECENT "NEWSWEEK" ARTICLE AS STATING THAT
OBSTACLES TO A NEW SALT TREATY WILL PROBABLY ARISE BETWEEN
THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION AND CONGRESS AND NOT BETWEEN
THE U.S. AND THE USSR. GRIGOR'EV THEN WRITES, "IN THIS
CASE, APPARENTLY THE TERM 'CONGRESS' MEANS OPPONENTS OF
GOOD NEIGHBORLY RELATIONS BETWEEN THE U.S. AND USSR, AND
DETENTE IN GENERAL. AND AMONG THEM ONE CANNOT BUT MENTION
THE MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX, THE PENTAGON AND OTHER

CIRCLES". GRIGOR'EV CONTINUES: "IT SEEMS THAT THESE INFLUENTIAL FORCES CONTINUE NOT ONLY TO OPPOSE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE WORK OF A STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION AGREEMENT, BUT TO STIMULATE MATERIAL PREPARATION FOR A WAR ON A GLOBAL SCALE. FOR THIS PURPOSE, THEY ARE PRESSING THE NATO KEYBOARD, DEVISING UP ARMS PROGRAMS FOR VARIOUS AREAS OF THE GLOBE".

3. IN THE SAME ARTICLE, GRIGOR'EV CITES CHARLES YOST AS WRITING IN THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR THAT IF AN "AGREEMENT IS NOT REACHED OR IS NOT RATIFIED, THIS WILL LEAD NOT ONLY TO THE OPENING OF AN EVEN MORE DANGEROUS AND COSTLY ARMS RACE, BUT WILL UNDERMINE U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS GENERALLY AND ENDANGER PEACE IN THE WORLD".

4. FEB 26 PRAVDA ALSO CARRIES REMARKS BY SENATORS CRANS-
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-----060428 281013Z /11

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INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
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TON AND GRAVEL AND CONGRESSMAN BRADEMAS WELCOMING
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BREZHNEV'S POSITIVE CHARACTERIZATION OF U.S.-SOVIET PARLIAMENTARY EXCHANGES AND LOOKING FORWARD TO RETURN VISIT BY U.S. CONGRESSMEN.

5. SOVIET PRESS AND TV HAVE ALSO PUBLICIZED TASS ACCOUNT OF STATE DEPARTMENT STATEMENT WELCOMING BREZHNEV'S REMARKS ON RESULTS OF PONOMAREV VISIT, SOVIET DESIRE TO CONTINUE PARLIAMENTARY EXCHANGES AND SOVIET EXPRESSED DETERMINATION TO WORK TOWARD A PROMPT AND MUTUALLY ADVANTAGEOUS SALT AGREEMENT, WHICH WOULD BE AN IMPORTANT STEP IN IMPROVING U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS. (TASS ACCOUNT THEN GOES ON TO CRITICIZE DEPARTMENT'S "DISTORTION" OF SOVIET POLICY IN THE HORN.)

6. COMMENT: WE EXPECT SOVIET MEDIA TO DRAW LIBERALLY ON BREZHNEV'S FEB 24 STATEMENTS AS BASIS FOR REINFORCING SOVIET EXPRESSIONS OF GOOD INTENTIONS AND SUPPORT FOR AN EARLY SALT AGREEMENT AND A GENERAL IMPROVEMENT IN SOVIET-U.S. RELATIONS. WHILE DOING SO, THE SOVIET PRESS WILL ALSO CONTINUE TO PLACE BLAME ON U.S. FOR DIFFICULTIES IN SALT NEGOTIATIONS, AS BREZHNEV DID IN HIS REMARKS.

7. THE TASS ACCOUNT OF KENNEDY'S SPEECH AND THE GRIGOR'EV EDITORIAL ARE ALSO NOTEWORTHY FOR THEIR MENTION OF POSSIBILITY SALT AGREEMENT MAY NOT BE REACHED OR RATIFIED (YOST COMMENT), OR MAY BE POSTPONED UNTIL 1979 (KENNEDY COMMENT). THIS CONTRASTS WITH OPTIMISM BREZHNEV EXPRESSED ON SALT ACCORD ("VERY GOOD POSSIBILITIES FOR SUCCESS") IN HIS PRAVDA INTERVIEW LAST DEC 24 (REF B). MATLOCK

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, SALT (ARMS CONTROL), SPEECHES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MOSCOW03089
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780091-0490
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW USSALTTWO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978024/aaaaacto.tel
Line Count: 217
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: af0508d4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 MOSCOW 2709, 77 MOSCOW 18505
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3555670
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOVIET PRESS ON U.S. REACTION TO BREZHNEV FEBRU- ARY 24 STATEMENT
TAGS: PARM, PEPR, US, UR, (BREZHNEV, LEONID I)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/af0508d4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014